

# Haiti Mission Report

*April 3-8, 2010*

## Overview

On January 12, 2010 at 4:53 P.M. Haiti became the center of world attention when the strongest earthquake (7.0) since 1776 suddenly struck this already struggling nation. There have also been at least 33 aftershocks ranging in magnitude from 4.2 to 5.9. The Haitian government reports that 60% of structures are now unsafe for habitation. Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere with 80% of its nearly ten million people living in poverty. In fact, most of the people live on less than \$2.00 a day and two thirds of the people have no formal jobs. Haiti also has a history of political unrest and corruption. Literally tons of emergency relief supplies have now poured into a nation that is a little smaller than the state of Maryland to assist an estimated 3 million in need. Although distribution centers have been established, there was visible evidence of these desperately needed supplies being sold throughout the streets of Port au Prince. Religiously speaking, voodoo is formally recognized by the Haitian government and intertwined within its operations. Voodoo priests conduct rallies during the Easter season in an attempt to counter the death and resurrection message of Christ.

## Highlights

*April 3* – Many Haitian Americans were observed on the flight to Port au Prince. They were traveling to Haiti to help relatives and in some cases bring them back to the USA as refugees. Upon arrival, Pastor Lesly Bertrand, 5-Fold Global Partner in Haiti, greeted Brother Michael at the airport and transported him to a guest house where he was to briefly stay before going to the outlying villages. Evangelist Luis Sorto of Honduras was unable to join us due to a visa situation. The owners of the Villa MaMika Guest House, Gerald and Lyrvole, provide food and accommodations for mission groups only and they provided lodging for us without charge. We visited a medical clinic in the afternoon. Medical mission teams typically see 200 to 300 people each day for a week and dispense needed medicines and supplies.

*April 4 (Easter Sunday)* – We traveled to Croix-des-Bouquets just outside the capital where over 300 people of Grace Assembly Church gathered under a canopy for Easter services. The church building was severely damaged and unsafe. Michael preached on the certainty of Christ's resurrection and our hope in the future resurrection of the dead. On our journey back to Port au Prince we passed at least two voodoo rallies. There are many different Voodoo societies in Haiti. One small group called *bizango* in south Haiti has been known to eat human flesh. We received a tour of Port au Prince during the afternoon. There were collapsed buildings everywhere!

*April 5* – Prior to departing the guest house, we noticed the owner, Gerald, appeared to be feeling very well. We had prayed for him to be healed of the malaria attacking his body the previous day and sensed healing power was released through Jesus. He testified that he indeed was feeling good and we praised Jesus together. Pastor Lesly and Leon seemed hungry and after giving them some tuna packs, Brother Michael was determined to take no food for the next three days. After a day, this proved unnecessary as Pastor Lesly was one of the organizations approved for food distribution and all the families had received an adequate portion. However, the international distribution will continue for only three more months. We moved to the orphanage in the outlying villages in the afternoon where we lodged for the duration of the mission.

*April 6* – At 3:00 A.M. a voodoo rally was forcefully moving through the villages. Although annoying, our prayers left this display powerless. The Grace Assembly of Churches consists of 24 churches, 32 pastors, a school, and an orphanage, Grace and Love Children’s Home that opened just a week prior to the earthquake. The main church building, the school building, and four homes of his pastors were destroyed. The main part of the orphanage was spared, but the people still felt safer dwelling in the tents so we decided to stay in the orphanage in an attempt to relieve their fears. The ministry has a need for school sponsors (\$20 per month) and orphan sponsors (\$30 per month). As a distribution center, they have distributed food and water to 940 families in a day, which totals thousands of people. We also began meeting young pastors who confirmed Lesly’s concern for training the young leaders.

*April 7* – At 6:00 A.M. worship and praise could be heard from a nearby house fellowship of Grace Assembly. The voodoo band had been much louder the previous day, but without power. The worship of believers in Jesus was peaceful, soothing, and with far greater power. We walked to 3 of 5 villages in the area (Caniere, Bellancon, and Baubin). There was considerable damage to homes and many people were living in makeshift shacks. We spent time with Pastor Maxo Innocent who has four mountain churches and a vision to plant two more in targeted villages. He identified 12 young leaders and estimated a cost of \$1,000 to \$1,200 for a 5 to 7 day operation to plant each new church. Michael conducted a training session for five young leaders in the evening. The topics were authority in leadership and handling finances.

### **Lessons Learned**

- Church sponsored medical mission teams and humanitarian workers need to be strong in the Lord to maximize the Gospel’s impact.
- Leadership training of the next generation of spiritual leaders remains a top priority.
- Trusted ministers need to be identified and recruited to handle resources in a corrupt society.

- The church cannot afford to relax an emphasis on spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness.
- Money is not the determining factor for doing the Lord's work.
- National calls for prayer that are ecumenical in nature and include leaders of voodoo and other non-Christian religious organizations have a political rather than a spiritual purpose.

## **Conclusion**

The evil and corrupt nature of the Haitian government may not change, but this must not prevent the church from moving forward in the power of God. This reconnaissance mission revealed that the church of Haiti needs a fresh vision for evangelism, church planting, spiritual warfare, and leadership training. 5-Fold Global can assist by sending the International School of Ministry (ISOM) curriculum so Grace Assembly of Churches can begin their own spirit-filled school of ministry for young leaders. In addition, we believe the Lord will lead a 5-Fold Global Team to Haiti in a year or two to conduct a strategic operation. Although we praise God for the international response of food and water, the Haitian people now need spiritual food and this spiritual food must be delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

***Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Acts 3:6***